

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ABIDJA 12083 01 OF 02 161018Z
ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 EB-04 INR-05 /028 W
-----070025 161023Z /10

R 151721Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6581
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ABIDJAN 12083

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: OTRA, OVIP
SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S PROJECTED TRIP TO AFRICA

REF: STATE 295652

1. VISIT TO IVORY COAST BY DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER IN FEBRUARY WOULD BE BOTH VALUABLE AND TIMELY. THERE IS A WIDE RANGE OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS, STRETCHING FROM THE HORN TO SOUTHERN AFRICA, IN WHICH THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT TAKES A KEEN INTEREST AND WHERE HOUPHOUET HAS BEEN PERSONALLY ACTIVE IN SEEKING SOLUTIONS OR ACCOMMODATIONS WHICH PROTECT WESTERN INTERESTS. THESE ARE ALL AREAS IN WHICH THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT LOOKS TO THE UNITED STATES FOR LEADERSHIP AND WHERE HOUPHOUET BELIEVES AMERICAN INFLUENCE IS INDISPENSABLE TO COUNTERACT THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS CUBAN ALLIES. ACCORDINGLY, WE ARE CERTAIN THAT HOUPHOUET AND HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY BOTH TO PRESENT THEIR OWN VIEWS TO THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AND TO RECEIVE FROM HIM AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF THE U.S. POSITION.

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WM WE CAN EXPECT THAT THE IVORIANS WILL BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN, IN THE LIGHT OF HOUPHOUET'S RECENT INITIATIVE DESIGNED TO IMPROVE SOMALI-KENYAN RELATIONS, AND THAT THEY WILL BE ANXIOUS TO KNOW WHETHER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE PREPARED TO MODIFY ITS ARMS TRANSFER POLICY IN FAVOR OF THE SOMALIS. ANGOLA IS ANOTHER AREA IN WHICH

HOUPHOUET HAS BEEN ACTIVE AND HE WILL CERTAINLY WANT TO KNOW HOW WE SEE THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN ANGOLA EVOLVING AND HOW FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS THERE ARE LIKELY TO AFFECT THE POSITION OF UNITA AND RELATIONS BETWEEN LUANDA AND KINSHASA. SIMILARLY, IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, HOUPHOUET AND HIS SENIOR ADVISERS WILL BE INTERESTED IN OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF HEALTH OF THE ANGLO-US PROPOSALS ON ZIMBABWE AND THE LIKELY COURSE OF US POLICY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA.

3. IN SHORT, HOUPHOUET AND THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT WILL REGARD DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER'S VISIT AS AN UNUSUALLY VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN AUTHORITATIVE ANSWERS TO THEIR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ON THE U.S. ATTITUDE AND U.S. POLICY IN KEY PARTS OF AFRICA. FROM THE IVORIAN STANDPOINT, NOTHING COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT. FROM OUR STANDPOINT, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S VISIT CAN PROVIDE AN EXCEPTIONALLY USEFUL OPPORTUNITY NOT SIMPLY TO PROBE IVORIAN ATTITUDES -- WHICH IN MOST CASE HOUPHOUET HIMSELF HAS ALREADY DEFINED IN FAIRLY CLEAR TERMS -- BUT TO INFLUENCE IVORIAN DIPLOMATIC ACTIONS AND PRIORITIES IN WAYS HELPFUL TO U.S. POLICY. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND HOUPHOUET'S CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WHILE HIS ROLE THERE HAS BEEN LIMITED TO MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS AND OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS WITH ALL THE MAIN ACTORS, HE TAKES IT SERIOUSLY (AS EVIDENCED BY HIS LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER OF MARCH 14 OF THIS YEAR) AND WILL CERTAINLY WISH TO DISCUSS MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY.

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RM ALTHOUGH WE SEE THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH HOUPHOUET AND HIS SENIOR ADVISERS AS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE PROJECTED TRIP TO THE IVORY COAST, OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY IS ABLE TO UNDERTAKE TO DRAMATIZE OUR INTEREST IN THE IVORY COAST WILL ALSO BE VALUABLE. IF TIME PERMITS, A SHORT VISIT TO HOUPHOUET'S BIRTHPLACE AT YAMO USSOUKRO WOULD HAVE AN EXCELLENT IMPACT AND WOULD ALSO PERMIT THE DEPUTY SECRETARY TO SEE ONE OR MORE SELF-HELP OR PEACE CORPS PROJECTS, OUTSIDE OF ABIDJAN. THE TRIP TO YAMO USSOUKRO MADE LAST MAY BY ANDY YOUNG WAS EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL. THE TRIP CAN BE MADE BY AIR IN ABOUT 45 MINUTES, WHICH MEANS THAT THE DEPUTY SECRETARY COULD SPEND A MORNING THERE AND BE BACK IN TIME FOR LUNCH OR AFTER LUNCH. INCIDENTALLY, YAMO USSOUKRO HAS A RUNWAY AND CONTROL TOWER WHICH WOULD ACCOMMODATE A C-140.

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AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

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5. RE SIGNATURE OF THE RECENTLY NEGOTIATED AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT WITH THE IVORY COAST, WE THINK IT WOULD BE EXCELLENT IF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY WERE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WHILE IN ABIDJAN. WITHOUT MAKING ANY REFERENCE TO HIS POSSIBLE TRIP, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN FROM THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT THEIR ESTIMATE OF WHEN THEY WILL BE READY TO SIGN.

6. SINCE ABIDJAN IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND FUND, ONE OF THE ONLY PAN-AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS TO WHICH THE U.S. IS MAKING DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS, WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL AND APPROPRIATE FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY TO MEET BRIEFLY WITH PRESIDENT FORDWOR BOTH AS A COURTESY AND TO EMPHASIZE U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE ADB/ADF.

7. AS PLANNING FOR THE PROJECTED VISIT GOES FORWARD, WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT HOUPHOUET IS HIMSELF AN INDEFATIGABLE TRAVELER. HE MAKES SEVERAL TRIPS TO EUROPE EVERY YEAR AND INTERSPERSES THESE WITH AD HOC VISITS TO OTHER AFRICAN STATES. THE EARLIER WE CAN BE AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S PLANS WITH THE IVORIAN

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GOVERNMENT, THE BETTER, TO AVOID ANY POSSIBILITY OF CONFLICT BETWEEN HOUPHOUET'S TRAVEL PLANS AND THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S.
STEARNS

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